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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7092
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1081
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8498
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7400
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9046
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1429
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1032
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION SIT-IN ENDS WITHOUT MAJOR VIOLENCE

REF: DHAKA 2185

¶1. (SBU) On April 19, sporadic clashes between opposition activists and police in two downtown Dhaka areas injured some 60 persons and led to limited nearby property damage, according to press reports and other sources. Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at approximately 1000 demonstrators at one intersection several kilometers from the Prime Minister's Office, but, according to a journalist on the scene, exercised restraint following instructions over a police loudspeaker. An eyewitness told poloff he saw Awami League leaders in one area also urging restraint on their followers. At As of 1700 local, the situation throughout Dhaka is reported as close to normal.

¶2. (SBU) Demonstrators failed to breach or apparently seriously challenge police lines and barricades erected to block access to the PMO and the government secretariat. PM Begum Khaleda Zia arrived at her office at 1300, just as the sit-in was scheduled to end, and held scheduled meetings with a business group and the Palestinian ambassador.

¶3. (SBU) Late April 18, tensions had risen after a clash in old Dhaka between AL and BNP student activists injured as many as 100 persons after police intervened with tear gas and rubber bullets. The AL activists were apparently intercepted as they proceeded to a mass AL rally at the Paltan Maidan parade grounds, where AL president Sheik Hasina blasted the government for being tyrannical, corrupt, and ineffective. She offered to release financial disclosure statements for AL leaders and MPs. An AL official subsequently told us that her proposal for the leaders is contingent on BNP reciprocity, but he stated that the AL would honor requirements for parliamentary candidates to make disclosure statements about their financial, educational, and criminal backgrounds.

¶4. (C) Comment: Violence today turned out to be relatively modest, thanks to restraint from the AL and the police -- a good omen, we hope, for the 20 dawn-to-dusk nationwide strike the AL is pushing ahead with April 20 to press its demands for electoral and caretaker government reforms.
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